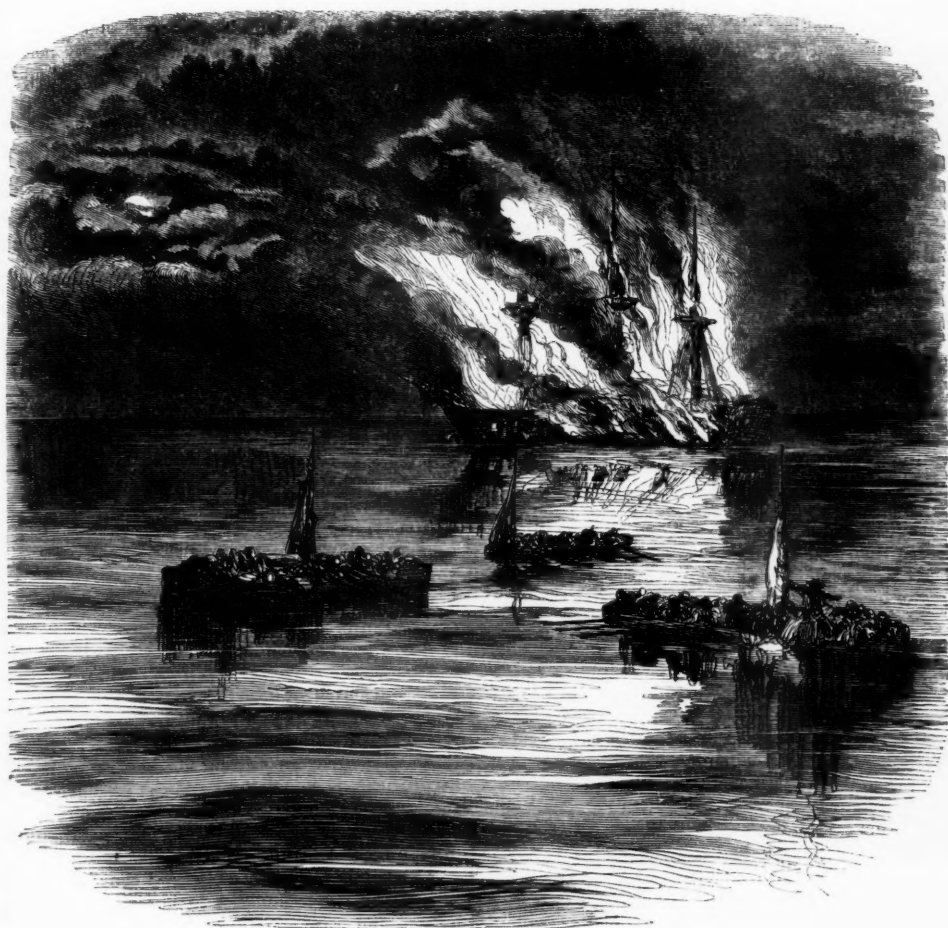


THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cooper.*



ESCAPE FROM THE BURNING WRECK.

AN OLD SAILOR'S STORY.

CHAPTER XVII.—ON A RAFT.

SUNSET: the sea was smooth as a mill-pond, for not a breath of air was stirring. Two boats were on the water, loaded almost to their gunwales with living freight: one of these was the long-boat of the hapless "Dover Castle," the other was the yawl. The mast of each was stepped and stayed; but the

sails had yet to be bent, and the oars lay listlessly on the water, secured to the rowlocks.

There was another strange-looking craft close by. On board the ill-fated ship was a curious punt-like boat, which the sailors had dubbed "a Moses." It was broad, shallow, and, I think, flat-bottomed. This had been lowered, with the other boats, from the burning ship, and with spars and planks torn from the bulk-heads in the after-part of the ship,

a platform had been hastily constructed across the boat, so as to form a raft, railed round by portions of the taffrail, and spars, and strengthened with cordage so as to render it tolerably secure. This raft, like the boats, was so loaded as almost to lie on the surface of the water, and a mast was fitted in the centre, and made secure by shrouds and stays to the sides and ends of the raft.

All this had been the work of two or three hours; and, thanks to the discipline maintained by our captain, aided by the exertions of the officers and crew, and favoured by the calm which providentially prevailed, every soul had escaped without accident from the burning ship, and had been distributed in the boats, together with casks of fresh water, bags of biscuit, and what other provisions could be rescued from the fire.

The passengers were first embarked, some in each craft; the captain was the last to leave the ship, and that, long after the latest hope of extinguishing the flames had expired. And now, at some quarter of a mile distant, boats and raft rested, and every eye was sorrowfully fixed upon the burning wreck.

It was a grand and magnificent, though a mournful sight, to see the doomed ship, which had battled successfully with so many storms, and which, a few hours before, seemed so secure on its proper element, now helplessly yielding itself to swift destruction; to see the flames bursting from every port-hole, leaping madly from mast to mast, and ascending in a cloud-capped pyramid high above them all, then sinking for a moment, to gather fresh strength from the combustibles below; to see, after this, yards and masts, yet unconsumed, toppling over and falling into the flames, to be reduced the next minute to smoke and ashes; to see, after this, the whole burning mass moved and shaken as by an internal convulsion, and scattering around blazing brands and half-consumed timbers, to be evermore quenched in the hissing waters. It was grand, but mournful, to hear the loud roaring of the flames as they shot upwards or danced exultingly to and fro, with other sounds which might easily have been mistaken for the dying groans of the tortured ship before her life had departed.

Until then, a deep and solemn silence had rested on the escaped; but when the last scene was over, and the water, rushing into the burning wreck, had borne it down and down until with one final gulp the sea had swallowed it up, and the swell caused by this ingurgitation had reached and rocked our frail refuges, a sorrowful cry rose, like the wailing of a mother, mingled with the stifled sob of a strong-hearted man, witnessing the death of a first-born. Then, too, a voice was heard, struggling at first with deep emotion and bitter feelings, but gaining strength as it went on. It was the captain, who spoke from the raft. I wish I could write down his short speech, just as it fell from his lips; but I cannot do this, and will not attempt it. I shall only say that Captain Phipps spoke up and out like a brave British sailor, and that, when he had done, a hearty cheer rose from boats and raft.

SUNRISE: and the two boats were nowhere in sight of the raft, which lay almost unmanageable

on the still water. The boats, well manned with rowers, and supplied with oars, had pulled towards the nearest land, five hundred miles and more away: the long-boat commanded by the first mate; the yawl by the second. The captain chose the raft, as being less easily navigated and not more secure than the boats, and with him were the fourth mate, the boatswain, three midshipmen, one of whom was Hugh Lawrence, and about twenty sailors. I have said that the passengers were distributed; and four were on the raft, one of these a lady, and another her child—a delicate girl about twelve years old. Thus crowded together on the frail platform intervening between them and the grave that spread beneath, and over which the waves of a rough sea would continually roll, were about thirty persons, with a small stock of provisions, five hundred miles from land, and with no certainty of reaching it; with no assurance, indeed, of an hour's safety.

"Davy!"

"Yes, Ned."

We were seated together on a part of the raft near to one of the sides; we had been seated there through the night, sometimes falling into uneasy slumbers, and waking with a sudden start, a consciousness of deep dread, and a sensation of chill, reaching to the very bones (at least I can answer for myself); and I remember that through part of the night I had rested with my head on Ned's knee, with his arm thrown protectively over me.

"Davy, queer navigation this, eh?"

"Yes, Ned: shall we ever get to land, do you think?"

"Why not, Davy? Cheer up. Look at that beautiful lady, now, Mrs. Haye, and her lovely little Miss Mary—there's patterns for us all."

Mrs. Haye and Miss Mary were the female passengers who had been placed on the raft, and, as I afterwards learned, by their own desire, when they knew that the captain intended to take that share of the danger. I should explain, too, that such preparations as could hurriedly be made for their convenience, were made. A small recess had been contrived for them near the centre of the raft, by lashing together pieces of the wreck and a few barrels, so as to form a kind of breast-work; and over this was secured an awning made of a small sail; some cushions also and a mattress were spread on the rough planking, for them to rest upon. It was a rude cabin; but it was the best that could be done for the poor ladies.

At the moment Ned whispered the above words to me, Mrs. Haye and her little girl had left their retreat, and were standing a few feet from us, talking to Captain Phipps. The lady's countenance was pale, but it was very calm and composed, and her manner was earnest. We could not hear what she was saying, but we caught the captain's reply: "Quite right, quite right: it shall be as you wish, madam. Nothing can be more proper; and I am obliged to you for mentioning it."

We presently learned what had been the subject of conversation. The next minute, the captain had called us around him.

"Gentlemen," he said, with an inclination of his head to the two male passengers and the little party

of officers and middies, "and my men, all of you; there's no question we are in a position which demands our utmost courage to look full in the face. I have no means, and never shall have, of knowing how the fire began; but I know one thing—we all did our best to put it out; and I have to thank every man of you for doing his duty nobly, and I have every confidence in you for what may be before us."

A hearty cheer interrupted the captain here: when it subsided, he went on: "That any of us are alive to talk about it, is owing to your supporting me by obeying orders like brave British sailors."

He paused here, and looked round.

"I am not going to ask you if you think I did my duty," he continued.

"You did it, though, captain," responded the men, heartily.

"Thank you, my men, for your good opinion; but may-be some of you think I might have done better—if I had ordered the boats to tow this raft, now?"

There was no reply to this; there *had* been a slight murmuring when it was found that the boats had parted company; and perhaps the captain had overheard it.

"I'll tell you why I did not do it. I wanted to give every man a fair chance of his life. The boats were chock-full, and heavy laden, and couldn't do more than carry their own freight, even if the weather holds fair; and if they had been encumbered with towing this raft, we should have made very little way."

"That's right enough," said one of the sailors close by me, to another at his elbow; "I told you so, Tom."

"And in the event of heavy weather setting in, all hands might have been lost. I hope you will see, men, that it would not have been right to have risked so many lives for the selfish chance of saving us."

"No, no, captain." A very cheerful shout this was, from a score or more of strong voices.

"Besides, by parting company, the boats may reach the land and bring us help. And now I wish to know if I retain your confidence."

Another hearty response.

"Because, you know, I have no means of enforcing orders now."

"You are commander of the raft, sir," said the boatswain, respectfully.

"And we'll obey orders, sir, just the same as if you was on the quarter-deck," added one of the sailors; and another cheer followed this declaration.

"That's well, my men; I thought I could rely on you all; but I wished to know. And I am glad you agree to this, because our best chance of getting through our present difficulty is by keeping up discipline."

"We'll all obey orders, sir, if we knew there wasn't another hour for us to live;" more than one of the sailors echoed this.

"And now," continued Captain Phipps, "we understand each other. There is not much to do while this calm lasts, only to strengthen the raft, and make all as secure as we can. But there's

another thing or two I have to say. The first is, about our food. I have cast my eye over the provisions and water, and I find there is enough to last about a week, full meals twice a day all round, barring accidents."

"Only that, captain?"

"Only that; and I feel it my duty to say that there is more than a chance of our being adrift much longer than a week, if all goes well with us. What I mean is, we can't make land in a week: it is not likely."

"We may be picked up, sir?" suggested a passenger.

"May be; but wise men prepare for the worst, as far as they can," said the captain; "and—but I see you men have something to say. You, Finn."

"Few words are best in such a case as this here, captain," said Ned, who had been whispering to the men around him; "and them words is 'Six upon four, or half allowance, and willing, for all but the lady and little one.'"

A gleam of pleasure passed over the captain's face. "I was about to propose it," he said; "but I am glad the proposal has come from you, my brave fellows. By taking care of our provisions, and especially of our water, we can get over a fortnight; and by that time, if it please God, we may be rescued. And now there is one thing more; I have been put in mind of a solemn duty"—he uncovered his head as he said this, and his meaning was understood. Sailors are, with too few exceptions, profane and irreligious; alas! that it should be so: but they are not atheists in creed; and there are times when serious and even devotional feelings are easily excited in their minds. It was so now; and very few eyes remained long dry, as the captain proceeded to read a psalm from the pocket Bible which Mrs. Haye put into his hand, and then to offer prayer to God, in broken, agitated tones—thanking him for deliverance so far experienced—confessing unworthiness and guilt—and asking for continued help in this time of peril and need.

CHAPTER XVIII.—SAVED.

TEN days had passed away, and we were yet on the raft. But our numbers were reduced. Three of the sailors, the boatswain, and one of the passengers were gone. A squall had burst over us on the third night of our being adrift, and a heavy sea swept these five off the raft. Happily the three previous days had been calm, so as to allow of the raft being strengthened by all the appliances at the captain's command, or it must have been broken up by the violence of the sea. Happily, also, the storm was of short continuance; for while it lasted, it was one continual struggle with death—every one holding on to the spars, which were firmly lashed together, and being completely drenched by the billows, which constantly rolled over our frail ark of refuge as it was tossed from one wave to another.

Provisionally, fine and quiet weather succeeded this fearful night, and the gentle winds which we experienced were generally favourable; but though the sail was kept set, and resort was had to an imperfect contrivance for steering the raft, so little progress was made that an observation taken by

the captain, on the seventh day from our escape from the burning wreck, showed that we were yet four hundred miles from land.

I should say here, that Captain Phipps had with great forethought rescued from the fire some of his instruments, together with a small compass and a chart; so that almost every day our course could be pretty nearly ascertained.

It would be painful, and perhaps tedious, were I to attempt a history of every day, as we lay almost hopelessly at the mercy of the waves. One day, indeed, was so like another, in outward appearance, and incidents were so few, that there is little, so far as I remember, to tell. Our sufferings, indeed, very soon commenced; for in spite of all the precautions taken, the small stock of provisions was so injured by the salt water as to be almost uneatable, and though the fresh water, being in closed casks, had escaped this taint, every day diminished the quantity, and rendered it more foul and putrid. Indeed, the sufferings from thirst by all on the raft were very dreadful; and it was a most merciful alleviation of them when, on the eighth day, the sky was overcast, and a heavy rain descended, although accompanied by a fierce and contrary gale and awful thunder.

But, amidst all our distresses, there were no murmurings and disputings. All did their best to alleviate the general misery, and to bear each his own burden, as manfully as he might. And indeed I could tell of more than one instance of heroic self-denial; such as a poor hungry fellow, but whose strength had not yet much failed, giving up the greater part of his small daily share of food, to sustain a sinking shipmate whose sufferings from privation were obviously greater than his own.

And I *must* tell of the heroism of the lady whose name I have already mentioned, and her little girl. Delicately brought up as Mrs. Haye had doubtless been—for she was the widow of a gentleman of fortune—she shared in all our sufferings, not only with uncommon patience, but with cheerfulness. To look at her countenance, and that of Miss Mary, was enough to drive discontent away. They were constantly among the sailors by day, and when hearts were saddest and hopes at the weakest, this good Christian lady would speak such cheering words to the very lowest among us, and read such beautiful passages from her pocket Bible, which was almost always in her hand, that the men were ashamed of being down-hearted and low-spirited in her presence. I need not say—and yet I may as well say it—that Mrs. Haye would not accept, either for herself or her daughter, the indulgence of the double rations which Ned Finn had proposed and all had agreed to. She said that, if any difference were made, they ought to have less than the rest, being only females, and unable to work or do anything towards escaping from the present peril, being, in fact, as *she* said, only encumbrances; as if, in the first place, less than the general allowance could have kept body and soul together; and, in the second place, as if Mrs. Haye did not do more than all the rest to keep up heart and hope.

I may add a few words here, too, about Hugh Lawrence. Next to the captain, he was the best

hand on the raft; for nobody thought much of the fourth mate, who was the only one that showed the white feather, and was pretty nearly always crying, when he should have been doing. But Hugh was a perfect hero for making the best of all that happened, and for turning it to good purpose. He was the captain's right hand all through this dreadful time, and was pretty nearly as much looked up to as the captain himself. And, once for all, I mean to set down here, what I have seen all through life, that there's no man makes so good a sailor, in all respects, as a true Christian. Also, that nothing so completely fits a man for all emergencies in life as true heart religion.

And now I come to the tenth day of our weary buffetings. Our raft held good, because every day it underwent a strict examination; and if any part seemed to be loosened, or giving way, it was strengthened. But this was pretty nearly the only bright side of our situation; and, indeed, this was not over bright; for what was the good of having a firm raft when we were still hundreds of miles from land, and no hope of reaching it before all our provisions were gone?

Starvation already stared us in the face. We had only to look on each other, to see true pictures of our own individual most lamentable condition. Every one had fallen away almost to skin and bone; our cheeks were hollow, our eyes low sunk in their sockets, yet so wild and staring. By wind and sun and want, our skins had turned almost black. Our voices were weak and piping. Our strength was almost gone; another gale and heavy sea, and we should all be washed away, for not one had strength to hold on with an infant's grasp; and when any one attempted to perform any little piece of needful work (it was not much that could be done), his hands and fingers trembled and refused to obey the will; or when we moved and tried to step across the raft, we staggered like drunken men, and our legs gave way beneath our light weight.

Not the fourth mate alone, but all on the raft, gave way to tears now: it was not from faint-heartedness, or unmanliness, but from weakness. The tears came without bidding, and without our knowing it.

Our provisions were almost gone. That morning, Captain Phipps had called us all around him, and told us that, at the present rate of living, our shares would last only six days longer; and he put it to us whether we could live on, and submit to a still reduced allowance, or whether we should go on as we had done, and trust to Providence to help us. This was the only time when there was anything like a dispute among the men; but now there was a difference of opinion. Some were for one plan, and some for the other; and one or two, led on by the fourth mate, said, "Why not have one good meal, and finish it off at once? we could but die then; and it was dying now they were by inches."

It was a wolfish sort of proposal, perhaps; but when it was mentioned there was danger of others falling in with it; till Ned Finn said, "Why not leave it to Madam Haye, shipmets?" And then others backed him up and said they would be guided by the lady, who had won all their hearts by her kindness and bravery.

Poor Mrs. Haye was in great distress at this time, though she bore her personal trial as a Christian. Privation and hardship had borne very hardly upon her gentle child; and the little girl lay now, dying as all believed, under the awning in the middle of the raft. Poor dear little one; there was not a man on the raft (worthy of being called a man) who would not have given up half of his scanty allowance again and again, if it would have done little Mary Haye any good. But no one could shield her from exposure—from the drenching spray and washing of the waves, which beat over us, and from the scorching heat of the sun, day after day. In short, the darling child lay helpless and hopeless, in great suffering, and expecting very soon to be released from her pains and griefs.

You may be sure how this bore upon the spirits of the poor mother; and yet she kept cheerful, and spoke very often to the men about the goodness of the Lord, and also about being prepared for death when and howsoever it came.

Well, when the question was put to Mrs. Haye about the provisions, she advised us not to waste what remained; at the same time, when she looked and saw all the wasted, starved forms around her, she could not hold with the captain's proposal: so it was agreed that the provisions should be served out as before, the good lady saying that she had such faith in God as led her to be almost certain that help would come in some way, in answer to the earnest prayers that had been put up every day and hour.

It was a little past noon of the tenth day, and the men were most of them seated on the raft, watching, but not with much eagerness or hope, the sail, which was filled out with a rather strong breeze: the most they could do was to sit and watch. We were all very silent, for speaking had become painful: it required too much exertion. Captain Phipps was standing by the round-house, as we had called Mrs. Haye's little inclosed space, and steadying himself by holding on to the mast; he was too weak to stand without that help. Mrs. Haye was sitting with her little daughter's head in her lap, whispering to her; and it was easy to guess what she was talking about, by the open Bible in her hand. Hugh Lawrence stood close by, also holding on by one of the stays; and of all on the raft, none was more altered than he—except little Mary; and good reason why, for he had often given up his share of food to others, and just before, he had been soaking a piece of his own hard biscuit in a pannikin of water, and putting it to the dear child's blue parched lips. Hugh was fond of Mary Haye, and he was a favourite with Mrs. Haye.

Well; this was our position, when a sharp cry rose from one of the sailors—it was Ned Finn—the cry of "A sail! a sail!"

In another moment all was excitement; every eye was strained. But I shall not attempt to describe what is indeed undecipherable. Let me rather say that the tumult of feeling and passion was so great, that what followed seems now to my remembrance like a troubled and incoherent dream. I remember only that, after an hour of agonizing suspense, the strange sail approached nearer and nearer;

and then we believed that the signal the captain had contrived to run up to the mast-head was observed by those on board. There was a joyous cry as the vessel bore down upon us; and beyond this I can recall only the sense of deliverance shared by us all, as we were lifted, one by one, on to her deck, and watched our deserted raft floated slowly away by the current.

POST-OFFICE SAVINGS BANKS.

HOW TO OPEN, TRANSFER, AND WITHDRAW ACCOUNTS.

WE propose to give brief yet plain and complete directions to all who wish to deposit their savings in these new banks, to transfer monies from one bank to another, or to withdraw monies after having deposited the same.

There is one trifling preliminary which alone we are unable to explain, but must leave to the discretion, the prudence, and the industry of each particular reader; and that is, how to get the money. On every other matter, we shall set forth all that the public need know in their dealings with these banks. "First catch your hare," said Mrs. Glasse; "first get some savings to deposit," say we; and as Mrs. Glasse entered into no detail as to whether the said hare was to be shot on your own or another's grounds, so we presume not to indicate how the saving is to be done. Only it *must* be done; for money can no more be deposited till possessed, than a hare can be cooked without first being caught.

1. First, then, *get the money*—no matter whether one shilling, or any number of shillings, or pounds and shillings, not exceeding £30. You cannot deposit in these banks less than a shilling at any one time, or more than £30 in any one year, or more than £150 in all, exclusive of interest. You may, moreover, deposit at once, or gradually, any sum not exceeding £30 in one year, and gradually go on to £150, in your own name; and at the same time, or subsequently, you may do the same for your wife, and then for each of your children under seven years of age, coupling their names with your own. Then you may continue your deposits in the names of other friends and relatives, coupled with your own, to any extent you think proper; subject, however, to the conditions of trust accounts, which you will find in Regulation 7, and which you would do well to read and consider carefully, previous to depositing any of your own money in any other than your own name.* It may be as well to observe that you must be careful that the deposit and interest shall not exceed £200 in each case; for when the £150, with interest, comes up to £220 (as it would do if left untouched for a few years), the interest ceases, and the deposit remains stationary. Some of it must, therefore, be withdrawn, or the principal sum will remain without further increase by interest.

2. Having got the money, go to the Post Office Savings Bank nearest to you, or to such other as

* See "A Handy Book on Post Office Savings Banks," by H. Riseborough Sharman, F.S.S., from which this useful chapter is extracted. G. J. Stevenson, 54, Paternoster Row, London.

you may prefer, and state to the postmaster that you wish to deposit money. He will hand you a "Declaration," of which the following is a copy:—

Depositor's Book.	<i>Copy of Declaration to be signed by Depositor on making First Deposit.</i>
Place	
No.	

In pursuance of an Act of Parliament, I, of do hereby declare to the Postmaster-General that I am desirous, on my own behalf, to become a depositor in the Post Office Savings Bank. I do further hereby declare that I am not directly or indirectly entitled to any deposit in, or benefit from the funds of this or any other Savings Bank in Great Britain or Ireland, nor to any sum or sums standing in the name or names of any other person or persons in the books of the said Post Office Savings Bank; and I do hereby also testify my consent that my deposits in the said Post Office Savings Bank shall be managed according to the regulations thereof.

Witness my hand, this day of 186
Signed by the said depositor,
in the presence of me,

Save and except such benefit as I may be entitled to from being a member of a Friendly Society legally established; or from such sum or sums as may be standing in my name as trustee jointly with the name or names and on behalf of any other depositor or depositors.

Your christian and surnames, address and occupation, will be entered on this form, and you will be required to sign the foregoing in the presence of the postmaster, or some person known to and appointed by him. If unable to go to the Post Office personally, a copy of the declaration must be provided for you, and signed by you in the presence of the minister or a churchwarden of the parish in which you reside, or a justice of the peace. It will be absolutely necessary for the depositor to be particularly accurate and truthful in making this declaration, inasmuch as, if any part thereof shall not be true, the money deposited will be forfeited under Regulation 3.*

3. Having got the money, arrived at the Post Office, and signed the declaration, your next duty will be to hand to the postmaster the amount you desire to deposit. He gives you a numbered depositor's book, in which you inscribe your signature. He enters the amount deposited, attests the receipt of the same by his signature and the dated stamp of his office, hands the book to you, and you are then at liberty to wend your way whithersoever you will. You are now safe; you have the security of the government for your money, even if you saw the postmaster decamp with it the moment he had got it. It will be necessary, however, for you to observe sundry little regulations when mistakes do occur, and it is hardly in the nature of things that even a well-matured scheme like this should be entirely free from error at the outset. It may be

as well, therefore, to explain to you what goes on, or ought to go on, when you leave the Post Office. The postmaster is bound by Act of Parliament to report the fact and amount of your deposit, with your name, address, and occupation, to the Chief Office that very day. You know in how long a time you could get an answer from London, had you written yourself to a correspondent who replied by return of post. At the expiration of a like interval, you may look out for an acknowledgment from the Chief Office, which will come in the following form:—

Depositor's Book.	NOTICE.—This Acknowledgment is of NO VALUE to any person but the Depositor to whom it is addressed.	SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT, GENERAL POST OFFICE, LONDON, 186
Place		
No.		

The Postmaster of having reported to the Postmaster-General the receipt by him of your deposit of £ your deposit has been placed to the credit of your Account in the Books of this Department.

Examined— Controller.

To.....

The receipt of this document constitutes what the Act of Parliament calls "the conclusive evidence of the depositor's claim to the repayment of the deposit, with interest thereon."

Be it observed, that this form of acknowledgment is necessary as a check upon the postmasters, and also upon the entry in the account in London; and, immediately upon its receipt, the depositor should fold it, and place it in the pocket of his "Depositor's Book" provided for the purpose. It will usually arrive by return of post; but as some delays are quite possible, though not very probable, let not the depositor be at all alarmed, as *he is quite safe without it*. If, at the expiration of seven days from the date of deposit, it should still not have come, or, having come, be found inaccurate, address a note "To the Controller of the Savings Bank Department, General Post Office, London."

All that it will be necessary to do is to copy from your depositor's book the entry which relates to the particular sum for which you have received no acknowledgment, give the number of your book, and the name of the place of deposit, and state that the acknowledgment has not been received, or is inaccurate, as the case may be. It is scarcely possible that this should not meet with an immediate response; but even if it should not, an application may be made again within ten days. We give these particulars in case of accidents, and not at all in the expectation that one depositor in 100,000 will ever be put to the trouble. This will serve to show, nevertheless, how complete is the provision not only for every probable, but for every possible, circumstance which may lead to error or delay.

Such, then, is, as plainly as we can express it, the process of depositing money in these banks;

* The Regulations are quoted in the "Handy Book."

let us now explain how to *transfer* accounts from any legally established Savings Bank to a Post Office Bank, or *vice versa*.

If you have money deposited in any legal Savings Bank, and you desire to transfer it to a Post Office Bank, you must apply to the trustees of the said Savings Bank for a certificate of the amount due to you in their hands. This certificate,* which they are bound to give under the Act of Parliament, will state what you have deposited with them, together with interest. When you get this certificate, your account with the old Savings Bank is *closed*. You can take the certificate to any Post Office Savings Bank, and open an account there. The postmaster will take the certificate as *so much actual hard cash paid to him*, without any deduction, and will give you a "Depositor's Book," and go through exactly the same ceremony as if you made your deposit in cash. It should be clearly understood that, in cases of this kind, the Postmaster-General's acknowledgment is not sent to the depositor until after the certificate has been verified by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt; but, as it is not likely that any delay will occur in obtaining that verification, the depositor is certain to receive his acknowledgment within the legal period of ten days. If he should not receive it, he ought of course to apply for it.

If, by any possibility, a person having a deposit in a Post Office Savings Bank desires to transfer it to another legal Savings Bank, not a Post Office Bank, he must apply to the Controller of the Savings Banks, General Post Office, London, who will send him a certificate of the amount, which he may deposit in the other bank as cash. These transfers involve no expense. *In all cases of transfer, read Regulation 14 carefully.*

Having shown the processes of *deposit* and *transfer*, dwelling on all the details, for the sake of making the matter plain to every one, we now come to the third point—*how to withdraw money*. This is a process as simple as the previous processes.

When you want to withdraw the whole, or a portion, of your money, go to the Post Office where it is deposited, and apply for a "Withdrawal Form," which will be furnished without charge. You will find a copy of this document in Regulation 15. Fill up the corner from your depositor's book, and be particular in giving your signature, address, and occupation in full, stating the exact amount you wish to withdraw, the number of your book, and the name of the office. In reply to the application so made, you will receive, probably by return of post, a "Warrant" (see Regulation 15), addressed to the postmaster, and directing him to pay you the amount demanded. The postmaster who has your money will be advised of this, as in the case of money orders, and will pay the amount named in the warrant, just as he would if it were a money order. You must, however, have your depositor's book with you, in which the postmaster will enter the amount he repays you, and attest

the same with his signature and the dated stamp of his office. You must sign the form of receipt at the foot of the warrant, which will be a sufficient discharge for the postmaster. It is obvious, therefore, that great caution will be necessary; for, as in the case of money orders, a person may become improperly possessed of them, forge the signature of the proper payee, and thus fraudulently obtain the money, so a person may improperly become possessed of these depositor's books and withdrawal forms, and thus get money out which does not belong to him. However, the same caution which prevents loss in the case of money orders, will prevent loss in these banks; but if all the requirements of the Post Office have been complied with by the party wrongfully obtaining the money, the bank is not responsible. You will do well, therefore, to keep your depositor's book in a secure place.

If you cannot attend personally, send to the Post Office for a "Form of Order," for a copy of which see Regulation 16.* You must sign this in the presence of the minister, magistrate, medical man, or churchwarden of the parish. If resident abroad, your personal identity must be attested by some constituted authority of the place in which you reside.

Interest on deposits in Post Office Savings Banks will be calculated at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum on all sums of £1, reckoning from the first day of the calendar month next ensuing after the deposit has been made. You will easily calculate your interest, as it will be at the rate of one half-penny per calendar month for every complete pound deposited. From the first day of the calendar month next following the day on which you make up your odd shillings to another complete pound, you will have $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. also for the complete pound so made up; and on December 31st in each year, the interest of the year will be calculated, added to the principal sum, and, with it, also bear interest from that time forward, till it may be withdrawn; or if a portion be withdrawn, interest will be paid on so many complete pounds as may still remain.

With regard to other matters, we need only refer our readers to the Act itself, and to the official regulations, both of which will be found at full length appended to this book. It will be seen that repayment of monies deposited in joint names (Regulation 7) can only be withdrawn with the receipts of *both* parties, that persons under twenty-one years of age may deposit, and that their receipt is sufficient discharge on withdrawal, and that *false declarations forfeit the deposit*. Married women may make deposits, and so may women who afterwards marry; and, unless the husband give due notice to the Postmaster-General, the wife may withdraw the amount, and her receipt will be held to be a sufficient discharge to the postmaster.

The trustees of Friendly Societies, Charitable Institutions, Provident Societies, and Penny Banks, may deposit any amount in the Post Office Banks. It will be observed that only certified Friendly Societies and Charitable Institutions approved by

* See Regulation, No. 14.

* See the "Handy Book."

the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt will be allowed to deposit. Trustees should read carefully Regulations 10 and 17, and the latter portion of Regulation 15. It will be found that not only have they all the advantages accorded to the general public, but there is no restriction upon the amount which they may deposit. Here, again, we press the necessity of extreme accuracy; for any false declaration involves the forfeiture of the whole amount deposited.

There is no charge for sending up the deposit book yearly (see Regulation 11), or for the deposit book itself, or for other postages on letters of inquiry, under the regulations. If you lose your deposit book, a shilling will be charged for a new one; and as this will involve correspondence, and considerable risk of loss to yourself, great care should be exercised in securing the safety of the book.

We have now given an outline of the advantages which the ability and patriotism of Mr. Gladstone have bestowed upon the people of England. It remains for the people of England to take care that they are not defrauded of those advantages by their own negligence, or by the interested opposition of any who have hitherto speculated on their prudence, and traded on their frugality. Let them bear in mind that opportunities are now afforded to them for the investment of their small savings, such as no nation has hitherto enjoyed, and that in the Post Office Savings Banks the working man may, if he pleases, lay the foundation of a fortune.

We would have all those who are in receipt of weekly wages remember that the Post Office Banks will be open until eight o'clock on Saturdays, that they will take deposits of one shilling, and that if a shilling a-week be laid by for ten years, the depositor will have more than *thirty pounds* at the end of that time. We would have all ministers of the gospel, all masters, all medical men, all those in short who have opportunities of speaking to the working classes, explain to them the advantages of these banks, and encourage to those habits of sobriety, frugality, and prudence, which, if persevered in, will make those who practise them, and their children, and their children's children, healthier, better servants, better workmen, and better men. The working man need no longer trust his little fund to those who will juggle him out of it. The government offers him interest, the government offers him security, and it will be his own fault henceforth if he loses one penny of the money which he may save.

THE EARTHEN CLOD.

ON an excursion into the country, Gotthold, observing the clods upon the rich ploughed fields, said to his companions: "I recollect having read of an old nobleman, who, every morning when he rose, had a fresh lump of earth brought to him, and for a while inhaled the scent of it, considering this an efficacious means of preserving his health and lengthening his days. I wish that not only all

noblemen, but all emperors, kings, princes, and lords, and, indeed, all Christians, observed the same custom. Whatever it might do to their bodies, it would infallibly promote the health of their souls, by reminding them of their mortality and nothingness. Let man parade, and boast himself as he will, he is nothing but a clod of earth, which the hand of God will very soon bruise and crumble into dust and ashes. There have been many famous monarchs in the world, great in name, power, and achievements. But what are they now? Search the tombs of the mightiest emperors—of Alexander, Charlemagne, and Otho—and think you that you will find in them anything but a handful of earth? It is the same with ourselves. All the great pains we have taken; our cares, toils, honours, and erudition, terminate at last in an earthen clod." For this reason, the wise man, when he beholds us vapouring with all the pomp of the frog in the moonbeam, cannot refrain from mocking us, and asks: "Why is earth and ashes proud? Man is filthy while he liveth, and when he is dead, creeping beasts and worms devour him." Oh that we always remembered this!—*Gotthold's "Emblems."*

BLACKBERRYING.

I REMEMBER, almost as if it were only last week—and yet what a long way off it seems—when we used to go blackberrying. It was a sort of annual treat, a home feast of tabernacles, and is inseparably associated with my memories of bright cheery autumn days, before life had fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, and the approach of winter made me melancholy. We were a large family; and with the addition of a few chosen companions, and the necessary staff of attendant nursemaids for the smaller fry, we usually made up a tolerable party. Fancy us, then, setting off on some fine September or October morning, according to the season, merry children of all ages, servants as well pleased as they; children's carriages (perambulators were not invented then) for the younger ones, big baskets to hold the blackberries which were to be gathered, hooked sticks to bring the reluctant branches within reach, clothes that would not spoil, and last but not of least importance, a basket of provisions, plain and solid, fit for well-earned healthy appetites, when we should have arrived at our camping ground in the forest.

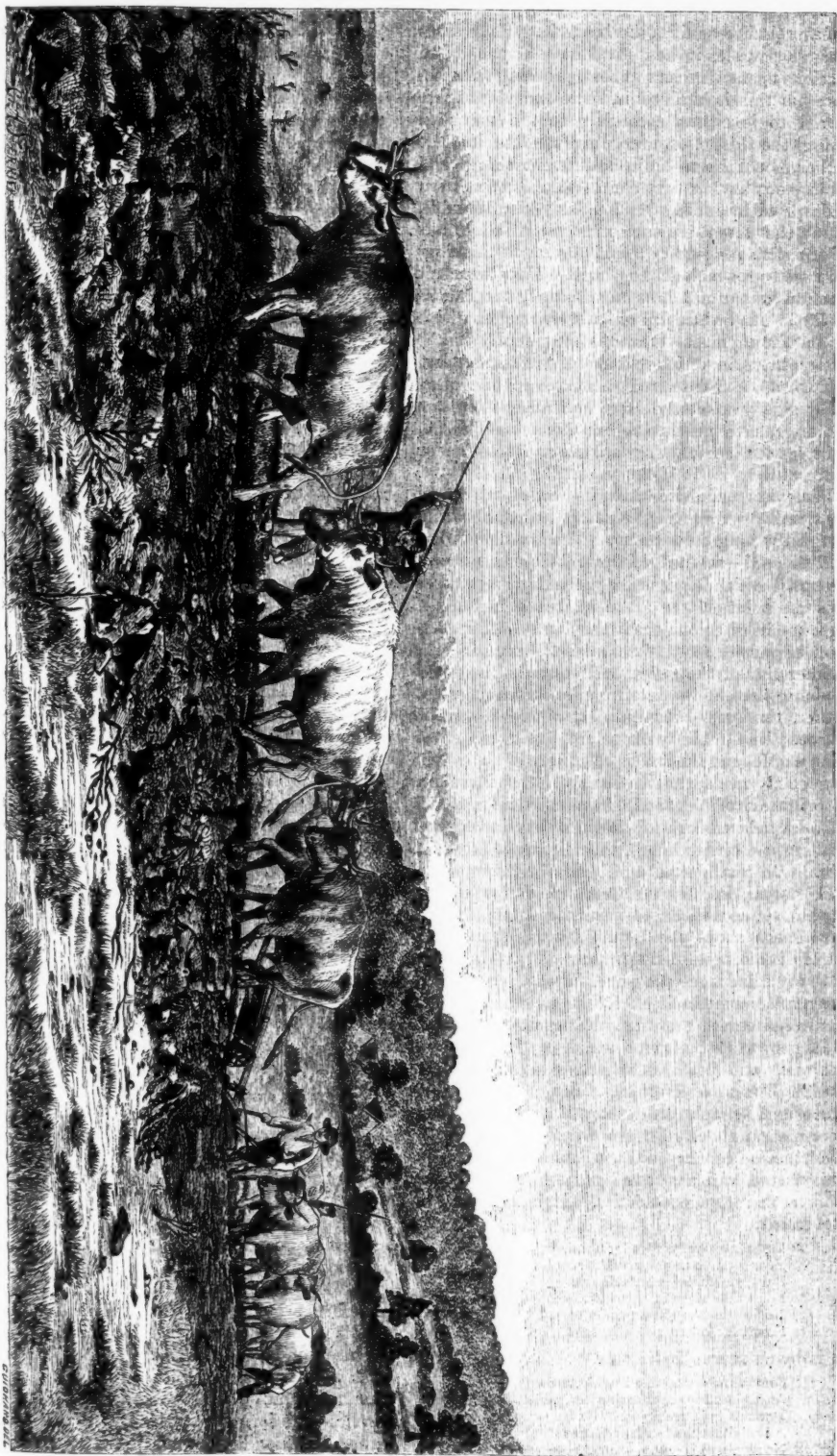
In the forest? Yes, we lived near it. Never mind what forest; to us it ever was and ever will be the forest. Very beautiful too it was, and is still. Here, groups of noble trees, forming that greenwood shade in which the old ballad-singers delight, under which Robin Hood and his merry men might have enjoyed their venison, or at the root of which the "melancholy Jacques" might have moralized. There, thick underwood,

"———Where, free and unafraid,

Amid the flowering brakes each cower creature strayed;"

and here and there, snug little farmsteads, and green lanes leading thereto, along which the brambles grew with unrestrained luxuriance. A beautiful sight is a big blackberry bush: I fear people

PLUGHING IN THE NIVERNOIS. BY ROSA BONHEUR.



GRUBBING CO.

have a prejudice against the bramble. Ever since Jotham's parable, it has stood as the type of an audacious upstart, useless at best, probably mischievous; but this is hardly fair, since the plant there referred to is either, according to the marginal reading, the thistle, or, according to Gesenius, the Southern buckthorn—quite a different thing, and certainly not having such claims to respect as even our despised bramble. So I hold to the bramble, and say that few things are more beautiful in our wild English hedgerows (alas! for model farming) than a well-grown blackberry bush. How luxuriant its ample expansion! how full of sturdy unmistakable life! And when full of fruit, rich melting ripe ones on the topmost—branches they hardly can be called; others in various stages of transition from green to red, and from red to purple; while often side by side you see the later blossoms; there are few things, save perhaps a hawthorn bush full of bright scarlet berries, that are more attractive or picturesque.

Then, what exquisite tints its leaves take, and how sturdily green they remain, some of them, through the long cold winter. The bramble is not afraid of cold—not he! I have before me now a little spray which I gathered yesterday, only three leaves on a bit of purple stem, but a rich, even gorgeous bit of colouring it is. One leaf, the soberest, is purple, like the stem, faintly touched with a ruddier tint at the point, and towards the stalk and along the veinings retaining its ordinary green. Another, the most beautiful, I am sure I cannot describe. The main veinings are green, the cross veinings gold, and the leaf itself of a reddish brown, going off towards the tip in scarlet and amber. The brightest of the three is as gay in red and gold as a field officer's uniform, but it is relieved by having the centre line of the veining of a bright green. Do you doubt me? Go and hunt the blackberry bushes this autumn, and you will probably find some even more beautiful. I admit there is a wildness about the bramble, a wilfulness and want of definiteness in its manner of growing, but it is to my mind none the worse for that; rather let me say, it commends itself to me on this account. You are quite sure there is nothing artificial about it. It grows as the river wanders, "at its own sweet will," and yet it is as sturdy and persistent as an English oak. Nothing short of grubbing it up root and branch can destroy it, and that is no easy or pleasant task. Bishop, a well-nigh forgotten poet of the last century, did not disdain the bramble for his theme, and has found something to say for it from a moral point of view. It is a pattern of contentment.

"Yor: shut your myrtles for a time up;
Your jasmine wants a wall to climb up:
But bramble, in its humble station,
Nor weather heeds, nor situation:
No season is too wet, too dry for't,
No ditch too low, no hedge too high for't."

It is by no means fastidious.

"Some shrubs intestine hatred cherish,
And, placed too near each other, perish.
Bramble indulges no such whim;
All neighbours are alike to him:
No stamp so scrubby, but he'll grace it;
No crab so sour, but he'll embrace it."

It is unostentatiously and unselfishly liberal.

"Full in your view, and next your hand,
The bramble's homely berries stand;
Eat as you list—none call you glutton!
Forbear—it matters not a button.
And is not, pray, this very quality
The essence of true hospitality?
When frank simplicity and sense
Make no parade, take no offence;
Such as it is, set forth the best,
And let the welcome add the rest."

It is a model of persevering endurance.

"The bramble's shoot, though fortune lay
Point blank obstructions in its way,
For no obstructions will give out;
Climbs up, creeps under, winds about;
Like valour, that can suffer, die,
Do anything, but yield or fly."

So much for the bramble. But I was writing about blackberrying, so now I must try and disengage myself from it; it is of no use trying to tear yourself away when it once gets hold of you. I think I mentioned a basket of provisions. Nothing very rich or *recherché*. No *pâtés*, or potted delicacies, or richly furnished dishes, such as adorn more costly picnics, but plain substantial viands such as suit children's appetites. I forget what, but one thing was a *sine qua non*, a whole loaf and a Dutch cheese. I am particular about that, for Dutch cheese was not a thing often seen at other times, or, indeed, cheese at all, as far as we were concerned. Bread and cheese—what could be better, what could be a greater treat to little people who had meat every day? I really forget whether it was even "bread and cheese and beer," or whether we contented ourselves with the pure element. Yet I do seem to have an indistinct recollection of "that poor creature small beer," and of a little forest public-house where it was obtained, very mild, and perfectly harmless. May no total abstinence visit us with too severe a censure for our youthful indiscretion.

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry in good greenwood."

We were merry, at any rate. We had been hard at work. We had had a long walk. We were hungry, and we had bread and cheese and—no, I will not be positive about the beer—all to ourselves in the forest. It was so free, so fresh, so different from common life. We only wanted to live there always, and eat blackberries and bread and cheese every day of our lives. Alas! that is not the only dream that we have long since consigned to the realm of impossibilities.

We filled our baskets. I well remember each of the little party, with a small basket slung round his or her neck, which, being filled, contributed its contents to the big basket aforesaid, and then, with a lightened load of provisions, and a heavy one of blackberries, we took our way home in the cool autumn evening, warned by the rapidly hastening dusk and the rising dew, the forest leaves pattering around us on to the ground, and the rapidly changing trees tinted crimson and gold by the rays of the setting sun. Mouths were very black with the friendly juice, no doubt; never mind, blackberries are wholesome and we liked them then. Clothes were torn by unfriendly, or shall I not say rather too friendly, brambles; but then they were not the best. Hands unprotected by gloves, con-

sidered very effeminate, and also greatly interfering with the work of gathering, showed many a scratch; but children's scratches don't come to much hurt if they are let alone; and altogether I think we got home all the better for our day's ramble, and with something like a peck of blackberries into the bargain.

I sometimes, when the busy duties in which I now live will let me, go and take a look at the old scenes of these pleasant treats, and very vividly, yet with a certain dream-like indefiniteness and unreality, do they rise up before me. How changed are the children of that day! Children of their own go blackberrying now, and they are grave men and women, susceptible of cold and indigestion, who would by no means think it a treat to sit on the ground and eat bread and cheese. How dream-like it all seems—that past time. And now and then in real dreams it comes before me, mixed with all manner of more recent events, and tinged with the sadness of later experiences. I wander again in the forest, but it is a forest of enchantment. I go blackberrying with my brothers and sisters and companions, but something sad and serious is sure to intervene and turn the day into gloom. I see the little "public" by the road-side, but it is the scene of some dreadful tragedy, or it changes mysteriously like a dissolving view into something new and strange. Is it so, that "we are such stuff as dreams are made of?" At least, it is so, I think, as far as childish days are concerned. What a halo there is round them! How gently and pleasantly they fade away into that dream-land of the past. How bright, yet with a dying lustre, they look as they disappear. And how they weave themselves gaily and sadly into those day-dreams in which the busiest of us find time now and then to indulge. Well, let us be thankful for these memories. What a sad grown-up life that must be which has no childhood in its thoughts—no remembrance of merry, pleasant, childish adventures, holidays, and enjoyments, for the imagination to feed upon. And how much better and wiser might we be, how much kinder and more gentle in spirit, if we now and then gave ourselves pause in the midst of this hurrying, bustling, nerve-racking life, and went into the fields and remembered when we were children. Children, alas! we never can be again, as we were then. Blackberries have not much relish for me now; but it does me good to think of the days when I could enjoy them, and when it was a treat, which helped to "gild the passing year," to go blackberrying.

SHAH ABBAS THE GREAT.

AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF THE SEVENTH KING OF PERSIA.

As Shah Abbas the Great was one day hunting in the mountains, and had accidentally got somewhat separated from his attendants, he came suddenly on a boy, who, while herding his goats, was playing very sweetly on a small flute. The Shah addressed him, and the boy, who had no suspicion of the hunter's rank, answered not only with perfect frankness, but great intelligence. Very soon, however, Iman Kuli, the then khan or governor

of Shiraz, appeared in the distance, and the Shah hastily gave him a sign as he approached, which imposed silence on him when he joined his royal master, who continued his conversation with the boy, receiving to all his interrogations replies so replete with good sense and propriety, as set both listeners in no small wonderment.

After leaving the young goatherd, the king asked the governor what he thought of the little rustic; and the khan, who was a man of much penetration, replied that he thought, if the boy were taught to read and write, he was likely to make a most useful servant for his Majesty.

Shah Abbas gave in to the proposal at once, and settled the matter by committing the future training of the young herdsman to the khan himself, who forthwith, (having without difficulty obtained possession of the boy's person,) took the matter in hand, and that with such happy success that the khan was able in a few years to employ his protégé in various subordinate offices within his province, and having thus tested his ability, felt safe in recommending him to his sovereign for higher employment.

The shah, delighted with the metamorphosis of a herd-boy into an able official, more especially as he could take to himself the credit of having first suspected the value of the uncut diamond, called him to court, and soon felt such confidence in him as to bestow on him the flattering appointment of Nazar, or Master of the Household, installing him at the same time among the dignitaries of the kingdom, under the name of Mahomed Ali Bey.

The new nazar was neither puffed up by the suddenness of his good fortune nor blinded by the greatness of his elevation, but conducted himself with such watchful zeal and incorruptible fidelity in his master's service, as to gain his fullest confidence; as the highest proof of which, the king sent him, on two several and very critical occasions, as ambassador to the Great Mogul, and each time had the utmost reason to be satisfied, not only with the faithfulness but with the prudence of his behaviour.

But the court of Persia was not then, and probably is not now, more free than other courts from the baneful influence of that envious rancour which watches for any crevice into which the wedge of calumny can be thrust, in order to accelerate the downfall of a royal favourite; and the very conscientiousness with which the nazar devoted himself to the duties of his office, and the exactitude and economy with which he regulated and stewarded the estates and revenues committed to his management, created him enemies among the most influential persons of the court, more particularly the eunuchs, and, worst of all, the ladies of the harem, whose extravagant wishes and boundless expenditure he unhesitatingly opposed, and, as far as he could, remorselessly restrained.

With this self-interestedly hostile party, several ministers and nobles of the kingdom associated themselves for political purposes, and strove, all in vain, to their bitter disappointment, to injure the honourable and justly honoured man in the opinion of Abbas the Great.

But what they failed to accomplish with that wise and experienced monarch, they anticipated attaining with less difficulty from his thoughtless and in every respect inferior successor, his grandson, Mirza Shah Isafi. Yet, with him even they seemed for a time to have reckoned without their host; for although one after another threw in a disparaging word against the nazar, and insidiously tried to infuse suspicions of his rectitude into the mind of the young monarch, he made as though he heard them not, till all at once there occurred what seemed to the cabal the long wished for favourable opportunity for effecting the obnoxious one's overthrow, and they availed themselves of it on the instant.

The king was one day amusing himself with the examination of his collection of costly sabres and daggers of various shapes, the hilts of which were all, more or less, richly set with jewels of great value, when one of his chamberlains asked, as if on the spur of the moment, if his Majesty would not cause to be fetched from his royal treasury that specially costly and indeed unique sabre which had been given to his illustrious grandfather, Shah Abbas, by the grand sultan, and which, being closely studded with jewels of priceless worth, was reported not to have its equal upon earth, and was in consequence always deposited for safety within the locked recesses of the royal treasure house.

The shah's curiosity being strongly excited by this glowing description, (and the more so, because he did not remember to have ever seen this renowned sabre, even on occasions when his grandfather's jewelled pomp was wont to be displayed before the eyes of strangers,) despatched a messenger instantly to the nazar, (who, be it remembered, was also keeper of the crown jewels,) to desire the sultan's splendid gift might forthwith be sent to him. The nazar, although he at once declared he had never seen such a sabre, commenced an immediate search through all the various repositories of the treasure-house, but without success; and the shah's messenger returned with this unsatisfactory answer.

The wily chamberlain, after expressing great surprise and disappointment, suggested that the book in which all foreign presents were registered might throw some light on the matter. The shah commanded it to be brought, and sure enough there stood a full description of the jewelled sabre, duly registered on being deposited in the royal treasury.

Now the facts of the case fully explanatory of the apparent mystery, and which were perfectly well known to several of the calumniators, though not to the young chamberlain, whom they put forward on the occasion, were in full accordance with the nazar's declaration that he had never seen the sabre now sought for. He never could have seen it, inasmuch as, before his appointment to the office of nazar, Shah Abbas had caused all the precious stones, as well as the hilt of massive gold, to be removed from the sultan's gift, and formed into a jewel of his own device, which, from its high worth and rare beauty, constituted in fact the greatest ornament of the present jewel chamber. But un-

fortunately, at the time when this alteration was made, it had been neglected to be noted in the registry, in which the jewelled sabre still figured, as before its spoliation; and this fact, too, was well known to more than one of the plotters, and formed in their minds full security against detection.

The malicious enviers were therefore now at the summit of their wishes; and when the shah, whose curiosity they had purposely excited to the highest pitch, naturally felt not only disappointment but displeasure at the nazar's declaration that he had never seen the sabre, contradicted as that was in distinct terms by the registry he himself ought to have examined when he entered on office, a wide door was opened for all imaginable insinuations and accusations against the apparently falling favourite. They accordingly hastened to inform their lord that the whole country had long been amazed by the immense expenditure in which the nazar indulged. He had, they said, erected caravanseries for the reception of pilgrims, at his own cost; he had built bridges and dykes for the improvement and security of the public roads; and lastly, had erected for himself so magnificent a house, or rather palace, that it were worth even his Majesty's while to look through it: and whence, asked they then, could any private individual procure means adequate to all these great undertakings, unless by helping himself from the royal treasury? It was therefore, they concluded, felt by them all as their bounden duty to counsel his Majesty to call the nazar to a strict account; and if he could prove his innocence, who would be so happy as they?

In the midst of these calumnious tirades, a messenger arrived from the nazar, soliciting an audience. It was granted; but how different was the reception which Mohamed Bey met from the king, to any he had ever before experienced in that court! With impatient gesture and wrathful tone, the monarch called on the nazar to "see to it that the missing sabre was forthcoming;" and added, what he intended as an alarming threat, that fifteen days would be granted to him to arrange his accounts, after the lapse of which time the king himself would institute a search through every nook of the treasure-house, and compare its contents, article by article, with the registry he now held in his hand.

The nazar, whose conscience spoke him free of ever having wronged his royal master to the value of a farthing, listened to those angry words with perfect composure, and then said, in a calmly respectful tone: "I have but one boon to implore from your gracious Majesty, and that is that the examination of the treasury and its comparison with the registry may not be delayed for fifteen days, but take place to-morrow morning."

The shah was startled, and a feeling of pity for an old servant impelled him to counsel the nazar to bethink himself well before he rejected the time offered for the due arrangement of his charge. Mohamed Bey, however, remained firm in his request for an immediate examination, and, in accordance therewith, it began on the following morning.

Everything was found in the most perfect order,

and article after article produced, as they stood on the register; not a tittle was wanting, save the jewelled sabre. But, on the other hand, there was found in the treasury a most remarkable ornament, compounded of the purest gold, and blazing with the largest and rarest jewels, of which no mention whatever could be found in the registry; furthermore, a richly damascened blade, with a plain unpretending soldier-like hilt: of this, too, no note was taken in the register.

The richly jewelled ornament naturally fixed the admiring attention of the shah; and as no one present confessed to any knowledge of its history, the court goldsmith was summoned to the royal presence, and he deposed to having been employed by his late Majesty Shah Abbas, to remove the jewels and golden hilt from the sultan's present, and to form them into this ornament, of which the shah himself gave him the drawing; the damascened blade, however, he had been desired to furnish with a plain useful hilt, as the shah valued the blade more than the setting. It was the sabre he now saw on the table.

The calumniators changed colour, but kept silence, thankful that no human testimony could be borne to their knowledge of the fact now disclosed. Silently, too, did the shah lay down the registry and withdraw from the treasure chamber, in order to pay the visit to the nazar's house, which he had announced would take place immediately after the treasury scrutiny, not without anticipated confirmation there of all the peculations he had been led to expect in the treasury.

The king and his suite entered the nazar's dwelling; according to oriental custom, the exalted guest must receive a present from his host. That presented by the nazar was small in value, yet "as costly," he remarked, on handing it to the monarch, "as a poor private man could afford;" and poor indeed, compared with its tasteful and elegant architecture, were the internal decorations of that so much vaunted mansion. No costly carpets; no rich hangings; no divans covered with gold-embroidered brocades, such as were wont to adorn the houses of nobles similar in rank, were there to be found. All was clean, comfortable, well kept, and in perfectly good taste, but all as simple as might be looked for in the houses of citizens of the middle class. Instead of chandeliers of rich Venetian glass, or of rock crystal, nothing but cheap Persian lamps; and in place of cups and bowls of gold, silver, or Japanese porcelain, their humble representatives in brass, copper, or common pottery, alone met the eye.

In his progress through the various halls and chambers, the shah had traversed a corridor, on one side of which was a door secured by three iron chains; and although, on his first passing along this corridor, the shah had given no heed to this carefully-barricaded entrance, yet, on his return, one of his attendants was on the alert to draw the monarch's attention to it. And, with reawakened, probably suspicious, curiosity, the shah asked Mohamed Bey what was therein guarded with such peculiar care.

"High and mighty king," replied the nazar, "all

that your Majesty hath hitherto beheld, whether in the treasure chamber, or within these walls, is not mine, but merely possessions committed to my stewardship, by the favour of my sovereign; but that which is hoarded up in this small carefully-secured chamber is truly my own, and I confide in your Majesty's justice and rectitude that it will never be wrenched from me."

The shah's curiosity, still more highly stimulated by this mysterious speech, impelled him to express an ardent desire to see the treasures of his treasury, and by Mohamed Bey's command the chains were loosed and the chamber thrown open. The shah eagerly entered a room, in which neither carpet, divan, nor furniture of any kind was to be seen. Into the naked whitewashed wall some iron nails had been driven, and across two of these rude supporters was slung a shepherd's crook; from another hung a wallet, from another a flute; while from two others depended the leathern water-flask and the coarse habiliments of a mountain goatherd. "All these," exclaimed the nazar, "were my own honestly and hard-earned possessions, when Shah Abbas the Great, your Majesty's illustrious predecessor, found me with my goats. The great abbas left me in quiet possession of my own, and I cherish the conviction that his potent grandson will not deprive me of them. But I have yet another boon to crave of my gracious king and master, and that is, the permission to lay aside this heavy robe of nazar, and to resume my light herdsman's garb, to hang my wallet and leathern flask over my shoulders, and, grasping staff and flute, set out once more for my unenvied, unmolested, and still dearly-loved mountains."

The youthful monarch, deeply moved by all these incontestable proofs of the rectitude of his so hardly used and malignantly aspersed servant, drew off, without uttering a word, his own royal robe, and motioned one of his nobles to invest the nazar with it, that being the highest honour which a Persian monarch can bestow.

The calumniators of such severely tested and sterling worth were justly visited by the well-merited wrath and abiding disfavour of the king; while Mohamed Bey, who showed himself invariably as the protector of the injured and the oppressed, remained to his dying hour in full possession of all his dignities and honours, the confidence of his prince, and the love of his fellow citizens.

SUBMARINE TELEGRAPHS.

THERE have been three marked events in the engineering world during the last two generations: Watt's introduction of the steam engine, which gave power; the introduction of railways, which supplied locomotion; and the invention of the electric telegraph, which, as an instantaneous agent for transmitting thought, is fully as important as either of the others.*

The commercial application of the first two dis-

* This paper is chiefly condensed from an able summary by Mr. Charles Manby, privately printed, of a recent long and important discussion at the Institution of Civil Engineers.

coveries has been vigorous and fairly successful, but the last invention, especially in its connection with submarine projects, has been particularly unfortunate. Out of nine thousand miles of wire laid down in different parts of the world, only three thousand miles, or one third, can now be reported as in tolerable working order, the remainder being an utter failure and loss—money thrown into the sea. One of the principal causes of this failure is found in the fact that the cables have never been thoroughly tested under water until they were deposited in the ocean. When the Red Sea telegraph was laid, it proved, like most lines just completed, very successful. It was stated to have been worked from Alexandria to Aden, at the rate of ten words per minute, with double relay stations at Kossiar and Suakin. There were a few embryo faults, but it is thought that it might have been worked successfully for a considerable time, if a permanent system of daily tests, and of timely repairs, had been established. The excessive tropical heat, and the effect of the metallic veins at the bottom of the sea, conspired to destroy this line. The sections of the cable—six in number—lasted altogether nine months before the first fault occurred, and only gave way the day before the Indian extension was completed.

The bad business organization of the Red Sea Telegraph Company, and the Atlantic Telegraph Company, is largely responsible for the terrible waste of capital in these enterprises. The Atlantic Telegraph swallowed up three hundred thousand pounds sterling, and mainly, perhaps, because the scientific details of the scheme were arranged before anything was practically known about deep sea cables. The contracts were hastily let, no time was given for the necessary preliminary experiments, and the laying down was hurried on with the most disastrous results.

The Red Sea Cable, the last and most gigantic on the list of failures, has not entirely broken down commercially, simply because a government guarantee was obtained before the enterprise was launched. A capital of eight hundred thousand pounds has been thrown into the sea; but the country, through its ministers, has undertaken to help the shareholders out of their loss, by paying them an annual dividend at the rate of four and a half per cent. for fifty years. This dividend, supplied by the national taxes, amounts to thirty-six thousand pounds per annum, and will eventually reach nearly two millions sterling. This waste of public money had its origin in causes entirely apart from scientific difficulties. After the "concession"—the firm—made from the Turkish government—had been purchased from the projector, it was found that, owing to a complication of arrangements, the Directors had also acquired an engineer and a contractor; that practically, the form of cable was decided upon, and that little remained for the Board to do but to pay. Although, at the instance of Lord Stanley, the specimen of the proposed Red Sea cable had been submitted to several scientific authorities, this had not been done until the form had been so far decided upon that it had become a foregone conclusion, as the contract for its manufacture had

been entered into. This contract was wrong in principle, as it was taken for a lump sum, thereby offering a premium upon saving some part of the slack or surplus cable.

The laying of cables tight or slack has a great deal to do with their failure or success. The Channel Islands cable was laid with such an amount of tension, that it was necessarily subject to abrasion, and when its strength was reduced by some of the wires being chafed, the cable was readily broken asunder. This fact seems to show that, in shallow water, cables should be laid as slack as possible, consistent with avoiding "kinks" or tangles. The failure of submarine cables in shallow water does not appear to be due so much to inherent defects in the cables themselves, as to the localities in which they are placed. Although the Port Patrick and Donaghadee cable, which has been submerged eight years, has never been damaged, yet the Dover and Calais, the Dover and Ostend, and other cables equally strong, have been broken. Then again, although the cable connecting Jersey with Pirhau, on the coast of France, which was laid in the latter part of 1859, has remained in good working order, while the Channel Islands cable has been broken in five or six places in the same time, yet a similar description of cable, five or six miles in length, laid off Alderney, when taken up a short time ago, was found to be in a very bad condition. Again, although the Hague cables have given a good deal of trouble, a similar cable, laid in 1857 on the coast of Norway, has remained in good working order. The decay of cables from corrosion is chiefly due to three causes:—first, to simple oxydation from water running over the cable; second, to the cable lying on a metallic surface; and third, to the formation of vegetation upon the cable. These things would seem to point to the necessity of having the bottom of the seas surrounding these islands as carefully depicted as the surface of the land is on geological maps; and such elaborate surveys of the sea bottom can only be accurately made by the hydrographers acting under and for the Board of Admiralty.

In selecting a route for submarine telegraph lines, it is now thought that deep water should be avoided, as far as possible, even if a considerable détour has to be made. In a depth of one hundred fathoms, a cable is beyond the reach of attrition, and is as little likely to be injured as when laid at a depth of two hundred or three hundred fathoms; whilst it can be repaired almost as if it lay in water thirty or forty fathoms deep. The nature of the bottom is most important, as, where rough ground and rocks exist, the cable cannot be grappled. To ascertain this correctly, the use of the sounding-lead alone is not sufficient; a mushroom anchor, which would bring up a bucketful of the surface material, and occasionally deep-pronged grapnels, ought to be employed.

With regard to the durability and maintenance of shoal-water cables, there seems to be two schools of engineers, one adopting comparatively light cables, the other laying them as heavy as possible. The earliest submarine cables between Dover and Calais, Dover and Ostend, the Magnetic Company's

lines to Ireland, as well as several others, were all strong cables, containing several conducting wires, covered with a thick serving of hemp, and having over all massive iron wires of large gauge. These have been singularly fortunate. Some of them, it is true, have been injured by ships' anchors, but such accidents are rare, and the cables have never suffered from "abrasion," or from being "washed away by the sea"—causes which seem to have been so fatal to the Channel Islands telegraph. On the other hand, the new system of laying light cables in shoal water was first adopted by the Electric Telegraph Company, in their lines from Orfordness to the Hague, where, instead of laying one strong heavy iron cable, four comparatively light cables, each with one conductor only, were laid across the North Sea, on the principle that the chances were against all the four being broken at the same time. This experiment was also adopted by the same company between Dublin and Holyhead; but, judging from the high annual cost for repairs, and from the fact that a heavy cable has been recently laid by the company from Dunwich to Zandvoort, in Holland, it does not seem to have proved satisfactory.

With regard to the construction of cables, it is considered that a metallic covering must be adopted, as there are cases where hemp-covered cables have been completely destroyed by marine animals. Iron should never be used as a covering for submarine cables, but copper, or some other metal or substance that will not oxydize, and will receive a gradual submarine deposit of a calcareous nature, affording a permanent protection against damage or decay. As far as experience has shown, it appears that in the deep ocean, scarcely more than the insulating covering is generally required. Gutta-percha—the usual insulating covering used—has several disadvantages. It is readily softened by heat, is liable to contain cavities, and is chemically affected by every current that passes into it. India-rubber possesses a much higher resistance to electricity, and certain compounds of that material have many valuable qualities for this work, such as flexibility and elasticity. Its durability, of course, can only be tested by time.

Improvements are evidently wanted in many of the processes of telegraphic manufacture, but not patents. Patents have proved the great stumbling-blocks of telegraphy; for, scarcely is the ink of the agreement for the purchase of one patent dry, before another is offered warranted to supersede all that has been previously accomplished.

Few, if any, of the submarine telegraphs are commercially remunerative, and with the failures of the Atlantic and Red Sea cables as precedents, companies will scarcely be found to embark in such undertakings without some Government assistance. The official mistake made in the case of the Red Sea telegraph is not likely to encourage the Government or the country; and although the means of communicating instantaneously with distant nations is perhaps one of the greatest boons which enlightened science has yet to give us, submarine telegraphy will probably have to wait some years before it is extended further.

CASTLETON AND ITS WONDERS.

WHERE is the visitor to Buxton who has not seen "Poole's Cavern?" to which we may apply the characteristic description by Hugh Miller of a cave near Cromarty, in which he speaks of "its grey roof bristling with stalactites, its grey floor knobbed with stalagmite, full of all manner of fantastic dependencies from the top and sides, with here little dark openings branching off into the living rock, and there unfinished columns standing out from it, roughened with fretted irregularities, and beaded with dew." Ample encouragement is given to strangers to visit this subterranean wonder, by the admirable arrangements of Mr. Redfern, to whom the charge of the cavern has been committed, and who, by the introduction of 140 gaslights, makes a trip to its Cimmerian darkness a less formidable thing than it would otherwise be. A visit to this cavern, known as one of "the Seven Wonders of the Peak," which, in the time of Henry VI, was a place of refuge to a robber of the name of Poole, fires the tourist with the desire of seeing some more of the cavernous depths with which Derbyshire abounds; and, seeing an advertisement of an omnibus drive to "Castleton and its wonders," we longed for a fair day on which to accomplish this excursion.

One Monday morning, when we were setting off on a pedestrian trip, we were accosted by Mr. Nall with the inquiry, "Go to Castleton to-day, sir? Just making up a party." Changing our route accordingly, and mounting to the top of his comfortable and well-horsed bus, we found there a pleasant party, representatives of the "Rose, Shamrock, and Thistle."

Castleton is twelve miles distant from Buxton. For ten miles the road is bleak, barren, and mountainous, yet not without its objects of interest. In the distance, we had a fine view of Kinderscout, one of the highest hills of the Peak; and five miles from Buxton, at a turn of the road, we came on the road-side to a great curiosity—"the Ebbing and Flowing Well." Every half hour it ebbs and flows. The flowing is accomplished in three minutes. In very dry weather the interval may be longer than half an hour; but the quantity of water which comes is always the same. On our way home at night, we drove up at the very moment when it began to flow, and had the pleasure of seeing the whole process. The ebb was peculiarly rapid.

A few miles farther on, we drew near Maur Tor, or the "shivering mountain," so named from one side of it being composed of loose sand, which frequently, especially in dry weather, presents the appearance of shivering, or falling down. Two miles from Castleton, a most magnificent valley opens up to view. It is named Hopedale; it is of great extent, beautifully diversified with wood, and divided into small plots or crofts. In a corner, and at the entrance of it, stands Castleton, a town kept up by miners and ropemakers.

At the point in the road where we first came in sight of Hopedale, we pulled up for an hour to see the Blue John Mine, where the fluor spar is ob-

tained which is made into the vases and other ornaments that adorn our museums and the drawing-rooms of the rich. We were each furnished with a lighted candle, and, after a descent by steps and sloping pathways to the depth of three hundred feet, we were introduced into the grand crystallized cavern, shaped like a dome, the full splendour of which is brought out by a chandelier of twenty-eight candles, raised aloft by a pulley to the height of one hundred feet. A few steps from this we enter the Organ Room, in which the "Blue John" is seen imbedded in the limestone rock. This is followed by a range of caverns in a serpentine direction, containing the most beautiful stalactite formations, resembling the falling of water, and also large groups of marine shells. Lord Mulgrave's Dining-room is next reached; and then, through long winding paths, fearful chasms, and huge detached stones, we were conducted into the Variegated Cavern, where the burning of a Bengal light shows the immense height, and gives a good though passing glimpse of the lovely spars by which the sides are adorned.

Having been furnished with specimens of the "Blue John," we resumed our places on the 'bus, which we again left half a mile from Castleton, in order to see the Speedwell Mine. The entrance to this is by a very long steep stair, which leads to a canal cut out of the solid rock by the miners, who were blasting in search of lead ore. The canal is very straight, and the part we sailed through was half a mile long. It is broad enough to contain the boat in which we were propelled, and in which we could sit comfortably without our heads coming in contact with the overhanging rock. The sum of £14,000 was spent in an eleven years' fruitless search for lead, several small veins of which are seen in the rock as we pass along. The guide not only propels the boat, but now and then fixes up a lighted candle on a place prepared for it on the sides of the tunnel, and a fine effect is produced by these lights glittering like stars amid the darkness. The water of the canal at its close bursts into a tremendous gulf, whose roof and bottom are invisible. We get out of the boat, and stand on a rocky platform. A strong iron rail has been put across the gulf, so that we could look down with safety into what has been called "the Bottomless Pit," into which 40,000 tons of rubbish were thrown during the excavation of the canal, and yet no perceptible diminution in its depth was made. The superfluous water of the canal falling into this depth makes a fearful noise, being heard during the whole course of our singular navigation, and becoming alarmingly loud as we neared the end of it. This cavern is 280 yards below the surface of the mountain, and so high that rockets ascending 450 feet have failed to render the roof visible. A Bengal light being fired here, produced an effect grand in the extreme.

Having again embarked on our homeward voyage, we came to the "Half-Way House," where two boats could pass each other, and to the "Bellows House," where the miners had their bellows erected. Hereabouts the guide, (whose steering, by the way,

was very peculiar, for, lying on a wooden board at the bow of the boat, and raising his foot, he pushed us along with great rapidity, by touching projections on the roof of the canal, using his hands at the same time on the sides with great adroitness,) prepared a blast in a recess of the rock. This he fired; then, springing into the boat and pushing along for a few yards, he again stopped, and enjoined perfect silence. Ere long, a slight fizzing noise was heard; and just as one of the company had said, "I fear it is a failure," a fearful report was given, most of our lights were extinguished, and a reverberation took place, long continued and overpowering.

Having emerged from our retreat, we walked into Castleton, whence, after taking some refreshments, we ascended to the ruins of Peak Castle, whose antiquity is very great. It is said to have been built by William Peveril, the natural son of William the Conqueror. From the lofty summit on which it stands there is obtained a fine view of the valley, the town with its fine old church, a deep ravine behind, as well as the romantic entrance to Peak Hole, or cavern, whither we now bent our steps. The spacious mouth or entrance was occupied by rope-makers and cord-workers, all very busy, and whose shrill cries to one another sounded strangely under the vaulted roof. Each of the party being furnished with a light, we were taught a lesson of deep humility at the outset, having to advance in a stooping posture for several yards. This cavern is half a mile and ten yards long. It consists of a succession of caverns connected by narrow openings or entrances. The river "Styx" used to be crossed in a flat boat, in which, one at a time lying down in the bottom, it was propelled a distance of fourteen yards, the rocks above being so close to the water as not to admit of any other position being assumed. Now a way has been blasted through the rock, the boat being hauled up, and shown as a curiosity, especially as her Majesty Queen Victoria, when yet a princess, was passed along in it. The immense height of the caverns through which we passed was revealed by the firing of blue and crimson lights. In the "Robber's Cave," with its five natural arches, our lights were given up to the guide, and we were left in total darkness. He took them to a great distance, and then, holding them up, approached us backwards. The effect produced was very fine, and at first we were ready to imagine it was the "robber" himself.

When we had, on our return, neared the Hole's mouth, the old cicerone extinguished all our lights, ordering us to join hands firmly and "follow the guide." After advancing for some paces in this curious attitude, we emerged, and never shall we forget the effect produced by the gleam of light which struck on us through the spacious entrance to the cavern, it being all the more remarkable after the entire darkness in which we had been submerged.

We had to make great haste in order to catch the 'bus, which conveyed us safely to our lodgings in Buxton, all of us having been much pleased with the wonders we had seen.



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